



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# PRACTICAL POINTS ON PRIVATE NURSING

IN CHARGE OF  
ISABEL MCISAAC

---

## NORMAL SALT SOLUTION

By IDORA ROSE

THE significance of salt has been impressed upon us from a very early date, Sacred History accounting for at least one unique process of formation. From that day to this it has held a place, and if we concur in the belief that nature has a use for all her materials, we ought to be able to convince the few who discard it from their list of ingesta that they are depriving themselves of one of the elements necessary to their complete physical compound.

Assuming the general recognition of its beneficial properties, we will pass by its discussion as a mineral, its place in economics, and consider it from the stand-point of a medicinal agent. This, no doubt, will call for the criticism from those who are daily called upon to prepare and use it, as a topic so common that discussion is unnecessary. But their indulgence is asked while a few thoughts are presented for the benefit of those who joined the rank and file prior to the many improvements of these modern days. Alumnæ societies can testify to the fact that the older graduates hunger for the new things in their line of work,—new methods, new apparatus, new ideas on old subjects,—and it ought to be a duty and privilege to satisfy that want as best we can. It is true that text-books on nursing are within reach of every nurse, but we find upon examination that many subjects are not treated in detail in these books, and it requires an original mind to make practical what is given only in outline. Furthermore, we are daily indebted to the physicians and surgeons for many new things not found in text-books, unless frequently revised.

With the subject in hand we are told that it is called “normal” or “physiological” salt solution, because it is so near like the normal serum of the blood when used at a proper temperature and at a given strength. Its therapeutic value is being emphasized every day by both surgeons and physicians, as it is used as a restorative agent in surgical

and medical cases alike. And as its ingredients are to be found in every household, there is no difficulty in having it whenever needed.

Another feature recommending its use is its non-toxicity, although the quantity and frequency of administration are to be regulated by reason, as is any form of treatment. In preparing the solution for use, we find there are several formulæ, of which the following is commonly given: Sodium chloride, or common salt, one and a half drachms to one quart of sterile water; or, as this solution is not changed chemically by boiling, the ingredients may be put together and boiled one-half hour; or, to be more particular, a perfectly clean bottle or fruit-jar has clean linen or gauze placed over the top for a filter, the salt is put on this, and the sterile water poured through it, thus dissolving and holding the salt in solution. The cover is then tightly adjusted and the can put into a vessel of water and boiled one-half hour.

If one is so placed that the exact weight of salt cannot be obtained, a teaspoonful is the equivalent.

As to the ways in which it may be used, there are several. Typically, transfusion is the process. But when a patient is in such a critical condition as to need the stimulating effect of the solution, there is scarcely time to spare to open a vein with all the precautions necessary, and consequently the fluid is injected into the connective tissue to be absorbed, thus reaching the blood in a less direct manner. In either case the operation is considered in the light of a hypodermic injection on a large scale, and it is obvious how necessary it is to have every step done in strict accordance with aseptic preciseness. The utensils employed, the hands of the operator, and the surface of the body selected must be surgically clean. In the absence of other appliances, a fountain syringe will answer, or a funnel to which is attached a piece of rubber tubing. The hypodermic needle is too small, but can be used in the absence of any other.

The solution should be at the body temperature, as the absorbing surfaces can act better at that temperature. In introducing the solution by rectum the same points are to be observed as in giving enemata. The rectum should be unloaded by simple enema, the hips elevated to aid the gravitation of the fluid, and the solution emptied high up by inserting the tube as far as the sigmoid flexure. Among the uses for which it is employed may be mentioned that of a spray or gargle in nose and throat affections as a cleansing measure. It is a common proceeding for some surgeons, when performing a laparotomy, to fill the abdominal cavity with the solution just before stitching the abdominal wall, claiming that, aside from its other properties, it modifies to a considerable extent the excessive thirst following operation.

In doing plastic operations surgeons recommend the irrigation of the working field with normal salt solution, in this way keeping the part clean and free from blood without the use of sponges. In cases of extensive burns, or wounds needing skin grafting, the grafts are immersed in this solution as an ideal preservative. In intestinal disturbances, where there are so many watery evacuations, the introduction of salt solution compensates for this loss in a most effectual manner.

It is interesting to notice the changes in a patient after the successful administration of normal salt solution. The arterial pressure is raised, the skin becomes moist, the kidneys are more active, thirst disappears, and temperature is elevated. Severe cases of hemorrhage, which ordinarily would be regarded as fatal, are now given a new lease of life through the judicious introduction of this valuable agent. And we think it is not exaggeration to say it is one of the simplest and one of the most important remedies in general use at the present time.

---

## THE OUTFIT OF THE PRIVATE-DUTY NURSE

By HELEN S. HAY

THE outfit of the nurse on private duty is a subject requiring no inconsiderable planning and thinking. Much must be sacrificed and much provided, that naught will be found lacking to thorough cleanliness, efficient service, and the common comfort. First, let us consider the needs of the wardrobe.

If "stripes" be worn, three suits will suffice. The seersucker at twelve-and-a-half cents a yard washes and wears admirably. Some prefer a finer quality costing about twenty cents. If white suits are preferred, four will be found necessary. Linen duck, Marseilles, and piqué are all good, though the two latter seem to retain their freshness longer. These materials cost from forty to sixty cents a yard. There is also a cotton duck at fifteen cents which wears and launders most satisfactorily. Many nurses find it a convenience to have a supply of both the striped and white uniforms, wearing the former on their heavier cases, and the latter where the duties are light, or more nearly like those of a companion. Also for surgical work the white seems especially desirable.

Of apron material there is nothing for wear and lasting freshness like the best grades of pillow-casing. Finer aprons will be found smirched and yellow while the older, heavier ones will be white and immaculate. Longcloth and heavy lawns, costing from twelve-and-